DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 208 506 EA 014 046

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TITLE Description and Rationale for the Planning, Monitoring, and Implementation (PMI) Model: Rationale.
PUB DATE 15 Apr 81
NOTE 7p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Los Angeles, CA, April 13-17, 1981). For related documents, see EA 014 043-045, and EA 014 059-060.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Educational Objectives; Elementary Secondary Education; *Evaluation Methods; *Input Output Analysis; *Measurement Techniques; *Models; *Program Evaluation; Research Methodology
IDENTIFIERS *District of Columbia Public Schools; *Planning Monitoring Implementation Model; Provus Discrepancy Evaluation Model; Stake (Robert E)

ABSTRACT

The rationale for the Planning, Monitoring, and Implementation Model (PMI) is the subject of this paper. The Superintendent of the District of Columbia Public Schools requested a model for systematic evaluation of educational programs to determine their effectiveness. The school system's emphasis on objective-referenced instruction and testing, performance-based teacher assessment, and administrative accountability required goal-attainment or objectives-oriented models with clear descriptions of existing conditions and outcomes and with emphasis on observation and monitoring. The approaches of Robert E. Stake and Malcolm Provus provided the basic strategies for the PMI model developed by the Division of Research and Evaluation. The model provides for both ongoing evaluation to improve the program and final evaluation to determine the worth of a program after it has been completed. Finally, the model is designed so that conclusions and implications of the evaluation can be related to decisions being made. (Author/MLF)

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DESCRIPTION AND RATIONALE FOR THE PLANNING, MONITORING, AND IMPLEMENTATION (PMI) MODEL: RATIONALE*

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You are responsible for research and evaluation in a large, urban school district. You receive a request from the Superintendent to "provide major offices of the school system with a model for systematic evaluation of educational programs to determine their effectiveness in achieving the goals and objectives of the Board of Education and Superintendent..." What model would you choose, and why?

The question implies a constraint: that a choice should be made from existing models. The model that perhaps comes most readily to mind in education is the CIPP (Context-Input-Process-Product) model. [1] But, as Steele [2] has shown, there is a great variety of program evaluation models to choose from. Different models serve different purposes, meet different needs, are applicable to different levels or phases of a program. The CIPP model has characteristics that serve some purposes, meet some needs. But is it necessarily the most suitable for your purposes, needs, and situation?

To respond to the Superintendent's request, it was necessary to consider a number of factors. What is the focus of the school system's programs? In the District of Columbia, the focus has been on objective-referenced instruction and testing, performance-based teacher assessment, and administrative accountability. Measurable goals and objectives are stressed at all levels and in all areas. A systematic planning process is emphasized at each level.

EA 014 036

*This presentation was made as a part of a symposium, "The Development of an Evaluation Model for a Public School System and Applications at Different Levels," presented at the American Educational Research Association (AERA) Annual Meeting in Los Angeles, California, April 15, 1981.

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What is the structure of the educational program? It has many elements, both horizontally at a given level of management and operation, and vertically in the school system. It consists principally of established or on-going programs, projects and operations, but it also contains new ones. Thus, the evaluation model chosen needed to take account of a variety of persons, objectives and goals (or, more correctly, sub-goals and objectives); processes, and situations.

What evaluation information is wanted by decision-makers at different levels, and what decisions are anticipated? The general approach in the DCPS is a step-by-step one, with each step having its own performance objective. This approach extends to the educational programs. The main achievement tests in reading and math, used citywide in grades 1-9, are criterion-referenced. Data are reported in terms of objectives mastered. Thus, the school system focuses on whether or not objectives are accomplished. Decisions tend to focus on what can be done if objectives are not accomplished, with corrective actions to be taken in as timely a fashion as possible. The evaluation information needed was, in part, information related to describing what objectives, whether or not accomplished, how they were accomplished (processes) and, if not accomplished, why? Explanatory as well as descriptive information was needed. Monitoring as well as evaluation was needed. Evaluation was defined as a systematic procedure for collecting and analyzing information for the purpose of decision-making. Monitoring was to be both adminstrative (to be able to take immediate corrective action) and evaluative (to provide explanatory information over time).

What are the resources for carrying out evaluation? The District's Division of Research and Evaluation had nothing like the resources needed to do the planning, design, data gathering, and analysis at all levels of the

educational program. An approach was needed that could be decentralized, but still provide consistent and compatible information suitable for central decision-making. But decentralization of evaluation also increases the potential training and quality control needs as part of an installation and implementation process. Those needs in turn raised other resource concerns.

Different evaluation models seem to imply either one or a few evaluators working in a delimited project, or a large team which plans, gathers, processes, and analyzes, and reports large quantities of data. The situation and resources of the school system were not suitable for either of those evaluation organizations alone. Furthermore, the prevailing philosophy of the school system was conducive to much more extensive self-evaluation than either of those organizations implies.

Other factors entered into consideration, but those just stated illustrate some of the underlying aspects of the selection problem. In developing an evaluation strategy, which is of course what the selected (or developed) model represents, one finds that an important consideration is how evaluation is conceptualized in its intended context. Steele describes seven ideas about evaluation that were helpful guides:

1. Program evaluation is a process rather than a procedure. It's generic rather than specific.
2. Program evaluation is more than examining the attainment of objectives.
3. Program evaluation is more than just evaluating the results of a program.
4. Program evaluation is more than instructional evaluation.
5. Program evaluation is different from evaluative research.
6. Program evaluation is a management tool.
7. Program evaluation is people centered. [3]

The model finally selected, or more correctly, adapted, was based primarily on Stake's data identification model, first described in his now classic paper, "The Countenance of Educational Evaluation." [4] Stake was much concerned with the various kinds of data needed for evaluations of various programs in various contexts. He introduced this conceptual schema by stating that "this paper is not about what should be measured or how to measure. It is background for developing an evaluation plan. What and how are described later."[5] He emphasized that both descriptive and judgmental data are needed. He indicated that relationships and differences between what was intended and what occurred were important for understanding and, presumably, decision-making. The model he proposed was essentially an input-process-output model, but it linked plans with occurrences at each level in a diagnostically useful way. He spoke of antecedents (inputs), transactions (processes), and outcomes (outputs). He called attention to relationships of congruence between, for example, intended outcomes (plans) and observed outcomes (results). Congruence relationships, in Stake's model, are much the same as discrepancies in Provus' subsequently developed discrepancy analysis model. [6]

Stake's approach used curriculum as the illustrative application. Examples he gave went down to the level of a particular session of a particular instructor's class. The model, however, was generic. It could be applied to any type of activity: instructional, operational, or administrative. It could be applied to any definable level of the school system. The content of the data would differ, but the generic types of data would be the same. It could lead to decentralized application, as a consequence of its generic character. It could accommodate a variety of research designs, instruments, and data gathering procedures.

It appeared to minimize special training requirements. Stake's model provided a strategy for evaluating planning, monitoring and implementation at all levels of the school system and in all aspects of the educational program.

Stake's data classifying model was adapted to fit the needs of the District of Columbia Public School system. Stake, of course, was unaware of the adaptation at the time, and might, indeed, note substantial differences between what he intended and what may now be observed. That changes were made in adapting his ideas does not vitiate the fact that the Division of Research and Evaluation self-consciously used Stake's schema as a starting point in developing its evaluation strategy. What the adaptations were, how they have been applied at different levels of the school system, what problems have been encountered, what results have been achieved, what lessons have been learned -- these are the subjects of the remaining papers in this symposium.

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